



The Badger Bulletin

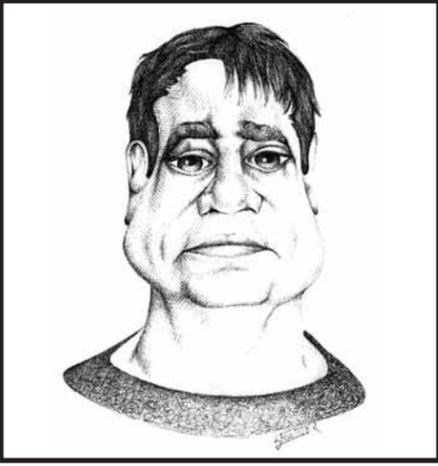
The American Postal Workers Union of Wisconsin

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2011 PPA Award Winner

September-October, 2011

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT . . . BY STEVE LORD



Time Is Running Out

USPS Capitalizes on Crisis

I hope all of you got the chance to read the white paper the USPS put out about solutions to our financial crisis. As I stated previously the USPS may see this crisis as an opportunity. Or is this what the USPS and the Republican Congress had in mind all along when postal reform was passed in 2006? In the white paper the USPS solutions for the financial crisis were to institute 5 day delivery,

APWU did not make concessions in order to keep the no lay off clause just to see the USPS go to congress to get rid of it. What a great deal for the USPS. How will we bargain with them again? Or do they think that collective bargaining is soon to be a thing of the past. The CBA gave the USPS the tools to be financially solvent for years to come, but they apparently don't know what to do with them.

at the money laying off this many workers would save not how the mail would get processed. Hopefully one or both of the congressional bodies will reject the USPS white paper wish list and saner remedies will be used. If not or only hope is that President Obama will veto any such bill. Please work steadfastly to get our views out or very soon we will be in big trouble.

Recall Recap

For the past 6 months or so a coalition of labor, community, and religious groups worked on the recall of 6 Republican state senators here in Wisconsin. We were able to prevail in 2 of the districts. We needed to win 3 to take over the majority in the senate. Also facing recall were 3 senate democrats. We prevailed in all 3 of these races. In the 9 recall races we prevailed in 5. A hollow victory seeing that we did not take back the senate. Will these efforts make legislators think before they fall in lock step with the far right policy makers? Will there be an effort to recall Governor Scott Walker? We will soon see. Will voters think a little harder before they cast their votes from now on? I surely hope so.

Thanks for listening.

"It's bad enough that the USPS won't live up to what they agreed to in the contract settlement, but now they want congress to give them the things they couldn't achieve."

take over retirement and health care, and to eliminate our no lay off clause. All of these items would require congressional action, but what an opportune time for the USPS to reach their previously unattainable goals.

It's bad enough that the USPS won't live up to what they agreed to in the contract settlement, but now they want congress to give them the things they couldn't achieve. The

An early out incentive if offered now would have employees lining up in droves. The USPS could then hire workers at the lower pay scale that the CBA calls for. The USPS would rather take the approach of laying off a hundred thousand or so workers. You and I know that the system would come to a grinding halt from lack of enough mail processors but the USPS is only looking

Can you hear the ticking of the clock? The time is coming very soon when the USPS runs out of money and the ability to borrow any more. Can you hear the ticking of the clock? Time is running out for you and I to contact our Congressional representatives and let them know we need them to support HR 1351 to keep the USPS solvent. Can you hear the ticking of the clock? Time is running out for you and I to inform the public about what's going on with the USPS's finances, how they got that way, and what can be done about it. I guarantee you that the majority of our customers and the general public have no idea of how desperate our situation is.

I read an editorial today that took a stand against postal unions and stated that at the end of September the USPS would not be able to pay the 5.5 billion dollars needed for its employees' health care. The writer had no idea that the 5.5 billion is for future retirees' health care. He had no idea that the USPS is required to pay for the retirement health care for employees who haven't even been hired yet. It is up to us to educate the public and do it quickly by whatever means necessary. So many groups are lining up to take advantage of us that it is mind boggling. The USPS is trying to use this dire situation to get rid of our no layoff clause, institute 5 day delivery, take over our retirement and health care, cut back on service by closing post offices and stations, and to consolidate processing operations.

The ultra-right in Washington DC seeks to use the crisis to break postal unions and privatize the USPS. All of these things can happen before the general public even knows that it's coming. What should you be doing? First and foremost you need to go to your nearest representative's office and get our message across to them. You must inform the general public of what the solution to the crisis is by writing editorials, handing out flyers, or by whatever means you can think of. This is it. Time has almost run out. Will we sit by and listen to the clock tick or will we fight to save our jobs and our future.

2011 PPA Winner

Pictured setting at the bottom left is Editor, John Durben accepting the Journalism Awards for *The Badger Bulletin* at the recent APWU National Postal Press Association held in Orlando, FL recently. (more about conference on page 3)

THE UNION NEWSPAPER IS THE MOST VISIBLE SIGN OF LIFE IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT



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The APWU of Wisconsin publishes this newsletter as a means of communicating with our members. The union encourages letters to the editor; letters must be signed but name will be withheld upon request. All opinions expressed are those of the writer, and not necessarily those of the state organization or its officers. The *Badger Bulletin* is a proud member of the APWU Postal Press Association. The *Badger Bulletin* is printed six (6) times per year. Articles not credited are those of the editor.

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ORGANIZATION . . . BY RICK GALLO



The ink is barely dry on our new national agreement, and already violations seem to be occurring. As you should be aware, there were several changes in the new contract concerning the performance of bargaining unit work by supervisors. Included in the agreement is a "Global Settlement of violations of Article 1.6.B." Postmasters and supervisors in Level 15 and 16 offices are limited to no more than 25 hours of bargaining unit work each week. Postmasters and supervisors in Level 18 offices are limited to no more than 15 hours of bargaining unit work each week. Postmasters and supervisors in Level 20 and above offices are prohibited from performing any bargaining unit work at all, unless it falls within the specific exceptions set forth in Article 1.6.A.

Postmasters and supervisors that perform bargaining unit work are required to record "what operation they are performing either by time clock, PS Form 1260 or other appropriate means." That documentation must be made available to the union upon request. From what I am hearing, for management it is simply business as usual.

Violations Of Our New Contract

They are continuing to perform bargaining unit work just as they did before, regardless of the number of hours; and they don't bother to document what they were doing, or when. Moreover, I also continue to hear stories of managers instructing postmasters/supervisors to cut clerk hours and perform more and more of our work even though it blatantly violates our contract.

Even at the national level, indications are that instructions have been issued to the field to violate the contract. Despite the agreement by the USPS and the union that "all time the supervisor or Postmaster spends 'staffing' the window will be counted toward the permissible bargaining unit work limits," USPS is apparently instructing that postmasters only need to record the time of their 'actual window transactions.' The APWU's position is that any time the window is open, someone must be staffing it. This does not limit the time to only that time when a transaction was recorded. **If this is going on at your office, please contact your steward immediately.** If you work in a small office that is not represented by a local, please contact a state regional representative. Contact information for these folks can be found in this newspaper, and will be designated by the first three digits of your office zip code.

Management has also apparently indicated that offices undergoing Delivery Unit Optimization (DUO) are exempt from the requirement that all offices must remain

at the same level they were when the contract began for purposes of the maximum

number of hours that postmasters or supervisors could perform bargaining unit work during each week. APWU disagrees, and a national-level dispute has been initiated.

The parties at the national level continue to work on Questions and Answers concerning the new agreement. As additional information becomes available, it is usually published through the APWU web site. Feel free to check the web site for additional guidance. It can be located at "www.apwu.org."

National level disputes have also been initiated concerning the establishment of new Postal Support Employee (PSE) positions at level 4 for use in level 15 and 16 post offices. The dispute further challenges the use of PSEs to work the window in any post office with fewer than three career retail clerks whose duties include working the window. And, yet another dispute involves the issuance of management instructions regarding the use of new, rather than existing, Standard Position Descriptions when hiring PSEs. I hope these are not indications of how USPS intends to follow the agreement for the remaining four years!



LEGISLATIVELY SPEAKING . . . BY JEFF WORDEN, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

— Welcome Back —

While our summers here in Wisconsin are quite short this summer was also very busy.

On July 12th and August 9th we had elections to "vote to recall certain Wisconsin State Senators". We were very fortunate that the Democrats were able to pick-up (2) two state senate seats that were originally won by republicans. The Democrats who won were Jessica King of District 18 and Jennifer Schilling of District 32. The Democrats were also under attack from republicans who were attempting to recall Democrat state senators Jim Holperin of District 12 and Robert Wirch of District 22. But, in the end it was the democrats who easily defeated their republican challengers or should I say Scott Walker cronies!

While the Democrats needed (3) three seats to control the state senate, by picking-up just these two seats was still a **major accomplishment!** Remember that republican state senator RR voted against party lines . . . that's right, he was against the removal of state workers collective bargaining rights, he was in favor of the working class and therefore it may NOW be possible to win back those collective bargaining rights for state workers!

Currently, we are in local Negotiations. With all the new language concerning PSE's

and NTFTE's and the fact the APWU National Union is working on a "Question & Answer" sheet, it will be awhile for all the "bugs are ironed-out of it".

One thing that ALL APWU MEMBERS MUST DO is to write to their Congressman/Congress-woman and ask them to Co-Sponsor Bill H.R. 1351. While it has been stated that the Postmaster General has stopped or will stop the payments for the prefunding of Postal retiree health care benefits, we must still remain vigilant and tell our families and friends to contact their Congressman/Congresswoman and urge them to support H.R. 1351 which would stop these unnecessary and unfair payments (Which by the way no other business public or private, is mandated to do). The current legislation requires the Post Office to fund a 75 year liability over 10 years with payments at over 5.5-Billion dollars per year!

When contacting your legislators you must also tell them to **OPPOSE** and vote "**NO**" on **H.R. 2309**. Rep. Darryl Issa (R-CA) is the Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and of course pretty much anti-labor/postal worker introduced this bill. If H.R. 2309 was passed here is what would probably happen; A five person

committee would be created that would create up to over two (2)-Billion dollars in service cuts in the first year alone! Of course that would mean the closing of station/branches, consolidating facilities without ever having any kind of appeal and eventually could/would force the unions to renegotiate our contracts which of course would most likely reduce our pay and benefits. All of this when in fact the problem is NOT postal worker pay & benefits . . . it's the PREFUNDING of the retiree health care benefits!

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who worked/helped on the "WE ARE WISCONSIN COMMITTEE"— Their families & friends for all the phone calling and door-to-door member walks. These people donated a lot of hours and sweat to help not only the labor movement, but also the working class families here in Wisconsin.

Of course the fight is not over . . . not over by a long shot! As I've written before (and I'll do it here again) APWU National President Cliff Guffy said it best: "**When your local calls on you to visit your congressional representative, you must act as if your job depends on it, because it does!**"

Hope everyone had a fun and safe summer. Take Care.

BADGER BULLETIN BOARD



by John E. Durben,
Editor

Last month I had the opportunity of attending the APWU National Postal Press Association Conference in Orlando, Florida. The weather was hot and wet as Florida was having a lot of thunderstorms during the week of the event.

One of the highlights for me while there was when Ed Schultz addressed the Editors in attendance. Ed Schultz is host of the number one progressive radio program "The Ed Schultz Show" as well as the MSNBC-TV program "The Ed show".

Shultz is known as one of the most consistent voices for working class Americans. He broadcast his TV Show live from Madison this Spring when the "Walker" protests were in full swing. He was also in Madison the night before his Orlando appearance to show support while Wisconsin was going through one of the recall voting days. Before leaving the Conference he promised to help APWU get the word out regarding the true cause of the problems facing the Postal Service. That evening APWU President Cliff Guffey was invited to appear on The Ed Show to inform the American Public that the problems were caused by Congress, not APWU, not the Postal Service, and not the employees. (The Ed Show can be seen on MSNBC Monday-Thursday nights at 9:00 p.m. Central)

A second highlight of the Conference was being able to accept two Journalism Awards for *The Badger Bulletin*. The first award was an Honorable Mention received for a cartoon that had been printed in the newsletter. The award was presented to Steve Fostner and me. Steve is a member of the Northeastern Wisconsin Area Local in Green Bay and is one heck of an artist. He has also donated some of his work at times to raffle off for COPA.

The second award was a First Place Award presented for Overall Excellence – Best Professional for *The Badger Bulletin*. Credit for this award goes to our contributors and our printer, Stacy Publishing.

I also had the honor of serving as Chairperson of the Election Committee again for the election of the Advisory Council. Elections are held every other year at the Biennial Conference. Incumbent Tony Carobine of Iron Mountain, Mi., was the unopposed winner to fill the President position again this year.

While this was happening, many APWU members were attending the John Akey Seminar being held in St. Paul, Mn. In talking with President Steve Lord, he indicates that the Seminar was a huge success and that the Minnesota APWU did a great job running the seminar. There was a large number of

National APWU PPA Conference Held In Orlando

National Officers present, including National President Guffey as well as key staff people to supplement the educational programs. In the past, some of these training programs were presented at the Akey Seminar as a test before being presented at the All Craft Conference scheduled later in the year.

It's been mentioned before by several of the State Officers in this publication, but we do have to take time to contact our Legislators and ask them to Support H.R. 1351 and vote against H.R. 2309. We know that many of our APWU members are Republicans. Whether it's because you're afraid of losing your guns or if you're ProLife, you might want to start thinking about some of the issues that puts

food on your table and a roof over your head.

If enacted, H.R. 2309, introduced by Rep. Darrell Issa (CA) would:

- Do nothing to correct USPS overpayments to its pension accounts.

- Do nothing to correct the congressional mandate that requires the USPS to pre-fund the healthcare benefits of future retirees. (No other government agency or private company bears this burden, which costs the USPS \$5 billion annually.)

- Force postal workers to make up the difference: Ensure that Postal wages are "comparable" to the private sector. Empower a board to unilaterally cut wages, abolish benefits, and end protection against layoffs.

- Create a commission that would order: \$1 billion worth of post office closures in the first year, and \$1 billion worth of facility closures in the second year. Increase employees' costs for healthcare and life insurance, and eliminate the right to bargain over these crucial benefits.

You can go to: <http://www.apwuwi.com/> for more information on both bills. There are also links available to make it easy for you to contact your Legislator.

Sorry about the confusion with the due date in the last issue, but the real due date this time is November 1st for those who are required to, or would like to submit items for publication.

HUMAN RELATIONS . . . BY LUCY HAUSER, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RELATIONS

Family Medical Leave

I recently took at class on FMLA taught by Steve Albanese while attending the John Akey Seminar in St Paul. There is currently a dispute at the National Level concerning the Post Office's refusal to let employees use the APWU forms. Until this issue is resolved we are forced to use the WH-380 forms from the Department of Labor. These forms ask more detailed questions than we are required by law to answer. Hopefully the issue will be resolved soon.

Some regulations have changed since the last time I attended a class. When an employee takes intermittent leave to care for a family member he must describe the "medical necessity" for taking such leave. My husband had surgery several months ago so I requested to take intermittent leave – he was unable to drive and we live 25 miles from the doctor's office, so it was necessary for me to take time off work to drive him to and from his doctor and therapy appointments. Other examples would be assistance with medical needs, hygiene, psychological needs and nutritional needs. Also: absences to care for somebody with a military disability are protected through your MSPB rights and these do not expire if your FMLA runs out. All time spent on military leave now counts toward the 1250 work hour requirement.

If management determines that your documentation is insufficient, they are required to notify you **in writing** what information is missing and they must allow you 7 days to submit the missing documentation. Any management official can contact an employee's physician without the employee's consent **in certain situations for verification of authenticity or clarification ONLY**. Another change involves a requirement for the doctor to review a description of your job duties prior to declaring you unable to work. It is not your job to tell the doctor what your duties entail – it is up to the employer to provide the doctor with the proper information.

If your FMLA condition is precertified and the circumstances have not changed, any absences of 3 days or less should not require any documentation. However, intermittent absences of more than 3 days may

require additional documentation if you are requesting Sick Leave or Annual Leave rather than LWOP.

You cannot be forced to disclose your medical diagnosis, but management may still ask you in an attempt to trick you into divulging your diagnosis. They do **not** need

this information in order to approve your FMLA request.

Another change made nation-wide: all the local FMLA coordinators are being replaced. Soon all claims will be handled at Shared Services by 45 Personnel Processing Specialists. I hope the transition will be smooth.

A Right-Wing Jobs Program

by: Jim Hightower

Attention jobless Americans! If you're among the millions of long-term unemployed people searching in vain for a job, here's a hot tip: they're hiring in Wisconsin.

There's one little catch, though, you have to be a Wisconsin jailbird to get one of these dandy positions. But that's no hill for a climber I'm sure America has plenty of out-of-work folks who are enterprising enough to move to the Badger State, steal a six pack from a 7-Eleven, go to jail, and become eligible. I should mention, though, that you won't get paid.

This so-called "work opportunity" is the first tangible product of Gov. Scott Walker's corporate-scripted mugging of the collective bargaining rights of teachers and other civil servants. Having stripped public employees of their democratic rights in the workplace, government managers can now replace them willy-nilly with low-wage workers — even with free prison labor.

Jim Ladwig, the executive honcho of Racine County, has leapt on this like a chicken on an extra-juicy June bug. The day the law took effect, he announced that such jobs as landscaping and snow shoveling would be transferred from unionized county workers to prisoners. The captives will receive no pay, but they could be rewarded with reduced sentences. "We have a win-win when we use the inmates," Ladwig exulted.

He's not the only one thrilled with this scheme to take middle-class paychecks from public employees. *The Washington Examiner*, a far-right newspaper that cheers on the privatization of public services, hailed Racine County's jailbird ploy as "great news for Wisconsin taxpayers. Hopefully, we'll see more of it."

So there you have the right wing's idea of a good jobs program for America. When Walker ran for governor last year, he promised to create 250,000 new jobs, and now he's delivering. To apply, just go directly to jail.

*It is to the real
advantage of every
producer, every
manufacturer and
every merchant to
cooperate in the
improvement of
working conditions
because the best
customer of
American industry is
the well-paid worker.*

*--President
Franklin D.
Roosevelt*

Integrate Heart Healthy Into Your Diet

8 SIMPLE STEPS TO HAVE A HEART HEALTHY DIET

Limit unhealthy fats and cholesterol

Of the possible changes, limiting how much saturated and trans fats you eat is the most important step you can take to reduce your blood cholesterol and lower your risk of coronary artery disease. Limit the amount of solid fats — butter, margarine and shortening — you add to food when cooking and serving. You can also reduce the amount of saturated fat in your diet by trimming fat off your meat or choosing lean meats with less than 10 percent fat.

Choose low-fat protein sources

Lean meat, poultry and fish, low-fat dairy products, and egg whites or egg substitutes are some of your best sources of protein. But be careful to choose lower fat options, such as skim milk rather than whole milk and skinless chicken breasts rather than fried chicken patties. Fish is another good alternative to high-fat meats. And certain types of fish are heart healthy because they're rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which can lower blood fats called triglycerides. Other sources are flaxseed, walnuts, soybeans and canola oil. Legumes — beans, peas and lentils — also are good sources of protein and contain less fat and no cholesterol, making them good substitute.

Eat more vegetables and fruits

Vegetables and fruits are good sources of vitamins and minerals; they are low in calories and rich in dietary fiber. Vegetables and fruits

also contain substances found in plants that may help prevent cardiovascular disease. Eating more fruits and vegetables may help you eat less high-fat foods, such as meat, cheese and snack foods. Keep vegetables washed and cut in your refrigerator for quick snacks.

Keep fruit in a bowl in your kitchen so that you'll remember to eat it. Choose recipes that have vegetables or fruits as the main ingredient, such as vegetable stir-fry or fresh fruit mixed into salads.

Select whole grains

Whole grains are good sources of fiber and other nutrients that play a role in regulating blood pressure and heart health. You can increase the amount of whole grains in a heart-healthy diet by making simple substitutions for refined grain products.

Reduce the sodium in your food

Eating a lot of sodium can contribute to high blood pressure, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Reducing sodium is an important part of a heart-healthy diet. Although reducing the amount of salt you add to food at the table or while cooking is a good first step, much of the salt you eat comes from canned or processed foods, such as soups and frozen dinners. Eating fresh foods and making your own soups



and stews can reduce the amount of salt you eat.

Control your portion size

In addition to knowing which foods to eat, you'll also need to know how much you should eat. Overloading your plate, taking seconds

and eating until you feel stuffed can lead to eating more calories, fat and cholesterol than you should. Portions served in restaurants are often more than anyone needs. Keep track of the number of servings you eat — and use proper serving sizes — to help control your portions.

Plan ahead: Create daily menus

You know what foods to feature in your

heart-healthy diet and which ones to limit. Now it's time to put your plans into action. Create daily menus using the six strategies listed above. When selecting foods for each meal and snack, emphasize vegetables, fruits and whole grains. Choose lean protein sources and limit high-fat and salty foods. Watch your portion sizes and add variety to your menu choices.

Allow yourself an occasional treat

Allow yourself an indulgence every now and then. A candy bar or handful of potato chips won't derail your heart-healthy diet. But don't let it turn into an excuse for giving up on your healthy-eating plan. If overindulgence is the exception, rather than the rule, you'll balance things out over the long term. What's important is that you eat healthy foods most of the time.

— Source: *APWU Health Plan*

— Justice —

The CEO of one of the nation's largest mortgage lenders was sentenced to a little more than three years in prison for a \$3 billion scheme that officials called one of the biggest corporate frauds in U.S. history. Paul Allen of Oakton, Virginia, will serve 40 months.

Compare that to the story of Roy Brown, a homeless man in Shreveport, Louisiana. Roy robbed a bank. When the teller handed him three stacks of bills he took one \$100 bill and

gave the rest back to the teller. He explained that he was homeless and hungry. The next day he felt remorseful and surrendered to police, saying his mother didn't raise him that way. What was his sentence? Fifteen years!

Steal 3 billion dollars out of personal greed and you get three years. Steal a hundred dollars to keep from starving and you get fifteen years. Can someone explain the logic to me? — Source: *The Communicator*



Postal Workers Should Thank Republican Darrell Issa

Darrell Issa, Republican chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, recently introduced the grotesquely misnamed "Postal Reform Act of 2011". This bill, if enacted into law, will slash our pay and benefits, tear up our collective bargaining agreement, and eliminate no layoff protection. It will close thousands of post offices, and end six day delivery. It will end binding arbitration, replacing it with a Bush-era mediation scheme heavily tilted in favor of the bosses. It will, in effect, allow right wing Republican radicals to rewrite our contract, if our elected union leaders are unwilling to surrender enough of our pay and benefits to satisfy their unionbusting demands.

APWU members should thank Darrell Issa!

We should thank him for playing his cards face up. It's no longer necessary for postal workers to wonder what will happen if Issa's Republican Party takes control of the Presidency and both houses of Congress in 2012. His "reform" bill spells it out with perfect clarity.

Amazingly, about one out of every three

union members votes Republican, time and time again. One out of every three union members votes for the party that represents only the interests of the rich, not the interests of working people. A third of us can normally be counted on to support this party of unionbusting, a party that openly seeks the destruction of unionism in this country. APWU members have seen the Republican attacks on collective bargaining in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana — and every other state where the GOP controls the executive and legislative branches of government. We've even seen Republican union busters win victories in blue New Jersey — aided and abetted by a handful of "Democratic" collaborators.

Have Republican voters with union cards in their wallets finally noticed the target painted on their backs?

ALL postal workers should take a long look at the Issa bill, and firmly resolve to unite and fight to defeat the Republican Party and its evil agenda.

In solidarity,

— by: Joe Quinlan Political Director
Source: *Philly Parcel*

The next Badger Bulletin due date is November 1, 2011 for those who would like to or are required to submit an article for publication. Thank you for your cooperation.